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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-third session
9 June-3 July 2003
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-third session

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerry **Kramer** (Canada)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

Item 4 (c)

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fortieth session on the in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

1. At its 2nd and 3rd meeting on 9 June 2003, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fortieth session on the in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions (E/AC.51/2003/4).

2. The representative of the Office of Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. Representatives of the Office responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Satisfaction was expressed that progress had been made on several of the recommendations. It was noted that some recommendations — for example,

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recommendation 4 — had been partially implemented. There was concurrence with the view of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that the review of the capacity of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to carry out better its analysis of socio-economic development trends, recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, should have proceeded sooner.

4. Comments were made regarding the *World Economic and Social Survey*. Given the low profile of that publication, it was suggested that a more rigorous comparison be made with the marketing and distribution of similar publications elsewhere. Considering the greater resonance of similar publications of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, the value of the *World Economic and Social Survey* was questioned. It was suggested that the Department should not be issuing that report, and that it should focus on providing secretariat functions to the intergovernmental processes rather than formulating its own solutions to global economic issues. While the triennial review mentioned improvements made to the content and presentation of the *Survey*, it did not make it clear whether there was a real effort to reach a wider range of government officials to whom the content of the *Survey* would be of interest. It was suggested that readers should be charged a fee for the *Survey*.

5. Regarding recommendation 4, on better integration of analytical and operational activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it was noted that changes in the form of reorganization did not occur until early 2003. The progress made by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in strengthening its survey was proof that integration could take place. However, this progress raised questions about the state of affairs at the other regional commissions, in particular at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

6. Regarding the recommended exchange of information among the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions (recommendation 5), it was observed that the selection of mutually convenient meeting dates was an important factor for obtaining a better exchange.

7. Regarding the implementation of recommendation 8, on mailing lists, there were concerns that the report contained little detail on progress achieved by ECA. A question was posed about the status of efforts by the regional commissions to sell their publications at a price that the regional markets can bear and about what progress could be achieved regarding the tiered pricing strategy set at Headquarters.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recommended approval of the conclusions and the recommendation of the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fortieth session on the in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions (E/AC.51/2003/4).**

9. **The Committee felt that the importance of the *World Economic and Social Survey* was not fully evaluated in the triennial review. The Committee recommended that the relevant departments consider further ways of**

enhancing its role as a reference tool and requested that its dissemination be promoted as widely as possible, as appropriate.

10. **The Committee stressed the need for regional commissions to redouble their efforts in establishing strong linkages with regional and national institutions that are end-users of the outputs of the commissions' work on regional socio-economic analysis, in order to ensure that the findings of such studies can be taken into account at the country and regional levels.**